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DDI #9300-82
17 November 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT : Andropov: His Power and Program

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1. The conventional wisdom is that the USSR will now enter a period of collegial rule in which continuity will be stressed and the new leaders will hold back from significant policy changes for the near to medium term. The immediate post-Khrushchev period is cited as precedent for what will happen.

2. That analysis is based on a misreading of the events of recent days, Andropov's character and history. In 1953, a number of new initiatives followed the death of Stalin (and preceded Khrushchev's consolidation of power) -- a purge of the KGB, an end to the intra-party terror, the Virgin Lands program, a decision to end the Korean War, and a mending of relations with the Yugoslavs. In 1964, the new leaders swept aside a number of major changes Khrushchev had made in the party organization, sharply raised investment in agriculture, began the heavy military buildup on the Sino-Soviet border, and actively began to support North Vietnam's effort to take over the South.

3. The nature of this succession and the character of Andropov himself argue strongly that he will move quickly to tackle many of Russia's problems. For the first time in Soviet history, there has been a smooth succession where the new leader has assumed power in an orderly way and probably with greater leeway to make decisions than enjoyed by his predecessor. There is a widely perceived need for renewal in the USSR -- to get the economy moving again, to get rid of corruption, to restore discipline, to reassert the idealism of the Revolution and relatedly reaffirm Russia's missionary/evangelical role at home and abroad. Perversely, this often takes the shape of nostalgia for Stalin. It is his forcefulness, toughness, decisiveness and ability to move the country that the Party seeks in Andropov -- believing they can have all that without the old dictator's less welcome attributes (such as a tendency to shoot his colleagues).

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4. Last spring, the Soviet leadership appears to have decided that Andropov was the man to lead the USSR out of its political and economic doldrums. He was moved from the KGB back to the Central Committee Secretariat, a more appropriate and acceptable launching point. I believe he has steadily been able to consolidate his power and begin, with his colleagues, to develop new initiatives and take action even before assuming power on certain of them. As the Soviets say, "it is not by accident" that in the last several months we have seen both a new internal crackdown in the Soviet Union and also a major new initiative in foreign policy -- the effort to improve relations between the Soviet Union and China. There also are indications that the military has been asking for additional resources. In my judgment, Andropov has been behind the first two of these initiatives and supported the third.

5. In brief, I believe the precedent of an extended period for the new leader to consolidate power -- as with Brezhnev after the overthrow of Khrushchev -- does not apply this time around. Instead we have a leader who has come to power with the support of the rest of the Politburo -- and probably of Brezhnev as well, has a mandate to act, and will do so broadly and sooner rather than later.

6. Andropov has been chosen as a man who can make decisions. He is on close terms with the powerful conservative elements in the Soviet hierarchy and is a man who can act with both intelligence and imagination on a long list of pressing foreign and domestic issues. What we are likely to see with Andropov is preservation of the forms of "collegiality" but the absence of its paralyzing effect on decision-making. All of the senior policymakers who might block Andropov are dead or out of power; those who remain, such as Ustinov and Gromyko, are closely allied with him. Indeed, if Andropov himself is not made President of the Soviet Union, the next most likely candidate will be someone with close ties to him such as Gromyko. By the same token, the new head of the KGB obviously is an important ally of Andropov.

7. Given Andropov's prompt and apparently unchallenged accession to power, his personality and past history, and the problems that face him, what might Andropov's agenda resemble for the coming period? On the basis of both 1953 and 1964, historical experience would suggest that a number of changes or initiatives can be expected although they may take time for us to recognize:

Internal Affairs

- A continuation of the "vigilance" campaign and internal crackdown to restore discipline, to give the impression of a strong hand at the top again, to forestall any impression of internal relaxation as a result of the succession, to keep the country well under control so that other initiatives or reforms do not lead to unrealistic expectations or spontaneous popular action, and to secure the home front for perhaps severe measures to revive the economy.

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- A major anti-corruption campaign by a man who is said to have a reputation for being relatively "clean" among Soviet leaders. It is plain that many of the present political problems in Poland and Romania grow out of popular awareness and resentment of the corruption of senior party officials. While Andropov would have to proceed carefully with this, the KGB's role in exposing the corruption of Brezhnev's family early in the year is indicative of his willingness to use this issue both politically and for larger ends. With his KGB background, he would know against whom to strike. There might even be a return of an occasional show trial specifically for corruption, although Andropov would choose the targets with care to insulate his strongest supporters.
- It seems logical and likely that Andropov would press for additional resources for both the military and the KGB. These are important constituencies for him and for his principal supporters in the leadership. While there might be some reallocation of priorities within the military, overall greater resources to respond to the perceived increased threat from the US are in the cards, in my view.
- On the economy, while specific policies are difficult to forecast at this point, we should expect "reform" and perhaps some limited experimentation. The focus on internal discipline, anti-corruption and vigilance -- in essence, the maintenance of strict internal controls -- must go hand in hand with any effort to undertake economic reform or experiments, witness the Polish experience. While a more detailed analysis of economic options available to the new leadership will take more time, the essential message is that we should anticipate change in this area and it seems likely to involve (1) greater trade with the West, (2) more problems for us in the area of technology transfer, and (3) more difficulty with our Western and Japanese allies over the issue of trade with the East. The idea of Andropov's willingness to consider reform in the Soviet economy is suggested by stories that he has been the protector of Hungarian economic reform and is willing to consider such new approaches -- although Hungary is obviously a much smaller country and the costs of failure are not as high (always a disincentive to agricultural reform in Russia).
- In the Party itself, I expect to see Andropov move to improve the competence of senior officials generally while ensuring that the new men are sympathetic to his objectives and politically supportive. He will work to place his own people in openings on the Politburo, Secretariat, and elsewhere in the hierarchy. In doing so, Andropov and his colleagues have an opportunity substantially to select the next generation of Soviet leaders.

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- US: Andropov seems likely to pursue a policy directed at achieving simultaneously some visible reduction in tensions with the United States, curbing new US arms programs, preventing the deployment of INF, and dividing the US from its European allies. A conciliatory approach to the United States at this point and effective use of propaganda and active measures, not to mention reinforcing the notions already current in the West of the need for forthcoming gestures to the new Soviet leader and the need to take advantage of this "new beginning," will be expected to help achieve the above goals. While the European decision on INF remains uncertain it would seem most unlikely for the Soviets to abandon the Geneva talks. Rather, Andropov's policy -- probably like that of his predecessor -- will be to stonewall at the talks. Should INF deployment actually begin, the Soviets could walk out and blame failure on the US. They then would also strive to prevent full deployment by playing on European fears and purported US intransigence.

The Soviets have seen a steady deterioration in US-Soviet relations for seven years under three US administrations. I believe they have concluded that the moment for establishing a more benign relationship on their terms has passed. Arms control negotiations and other forms of cooperation with the US government are likely considered to hold out little prospect of success for years to come. Thus, Andropov probably will focus Soviet policy on isolating the US and trying, through all instruments available to him, to build opposition to US military modernization and to US government policies toward the USSR generally, both at home and abroad.

- East-West Trade: Andropov likely will continue efforts to tie East and West Europe to the USSR through economic "cooperation" and trade. The Soviets already are aware of the leverage they hold because of the value of East-West trade to the West and the jobs said to depend upon it. Trade thus has both economic and political benefit for them. Andropov presumably will strive to maximize these benefits and seek a corollary benefit in the strains such increased dealings will bring between the US and its allies. After removal by the US of sanctions imposed after Afghanistan and after Poland, this instrument of US policy will have little credibility in the future in Soviet eyes. Indeed, Andropov will see the US as little more than an annoyance in the area of trade and technology transfer, unable to impose discipline inside the US, much less in Europe and Japan.

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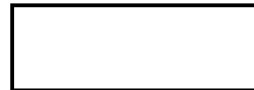
- Eastern Europe: Andropov reportedly has evinced considerable hostility to the Yugoslavs, Romanians and Czechs in the past -- implying little tolerance for deviation from loyalty to Moscow and political orthodoxy. On the other hand, he is said to be close to Kadar of Hungary and a protector of Hungarian economic reforms. This and other information suggests some flexibility toward East European efforts to cope with economic problems but only within the context of close ties to the USSR and firm party control. As in the USSR, Andropov could well urge his East European colleagues to impose stricter discipline at home -- accompanied by a campaign to root out obvious and damaging corruption in high places, perhaps by making examples of some officials.
- Afghanistan: Afghanistan seems to be a candidate for a new Soviet initiative to try to diminish in some measure both the insurgency there and their military role. It continues to be an embarrassment for them in Islamic countries as well as in the West, it does impose a certain military cost in both materiel and casualties, and it is an obstacle to any significant reconciliation with the Chinese. Some new initiative combining a new government with some greater legitimacy in Afghanistan (although still under Soviet control) coupled with strong pressure on Pakistan to abandon its supporting role for the insurgents could conceivably meet with some success if orchestrated well by the Soviets. It could involve a government in Kabul with a figleaf image of neutrality and a diminution of support for the insurgents that would allow the Soviets to withdraw at least some of their forces.
- Middle East: The short term options are not bright, but the Soviets are prepared to be patient. Egypt and Iran are the big prizes and Andropov will pursue overt and covert policies designed to take advantage of any instability in either country.
- Kampuchea: Kampuchea is another area where the Soviets could make some concessions to the Chinese for larger ends. Never before have the Soviets shown any particular sensitivity to Hanoi's concerns. Because the Russians are Vietnam's only ally and only source of important economic and military assistance, while the Vietnamese would be aggravated and unhappy with Moscow if it wanted to settle Kampuchea, Hanoi would have little choice but to go along. Again, some sort of face saving settlement in Kampuchea that would not involve a real defeat for the Vietnamese but would get the bulk of their troops out of the country might be sufficient.

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-- Third World: In the Third World, I believe we can expect not only a continuation of the direct and indirect destabilization activities the Soviets have had underway in recent years but perhaps an increase in that activity. In many ways Soviet policy in the Third World is likely to be indicative of a more assertive Soviet role abroad generally, although as our papers on Andropov have made clear, he prefers to win by strategem and maneuver rather than resort to force -- although he will use force if maneuvering fails and the risks are deemed acceptable.

8. In sum, the US faces a new and, in many ways, far more intelligent and skillful adversary than we confronted in Khrushchev or Brezhnev -- and a man who is a "doer". He is familiar with the world and a realist. My money says we will face a much greater challenge from the USSR under his leadership. While the specifics of his program are difficult to construct, we should be prepared for new Soviet initiatives in both internal and foreign policy. A leadership has come to power during the last week in the Soviet Union with greater power and more unity at the highest level than after either the succession in 1953 or 1964. It has come to power with considerable work to do and Andropov is not a man who will delay in setting in motion initiatives to address a number of issues and problems. The effort to repair relations with China -- long thought out of the question by most analysts in the West -- I believe is indicative of the kind of flexibility, pragmatism and boldness we can expect from this new leader.



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cc: ExDir
NIO/USSR-EE

Corrected pages
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- Middle East: The short term options are not bright, but the Soviets are prepared to be patient. Egypt and Iran are the big prizes and Andropov will pursue overt and covert policies designed to take advantage of any instability in either country.
- Kampuchea: Kampuchea is another area where the Soviets could make some concessions to the Chinese for larger ends. Never before have the Soviets shown any particular sensitivity to Hanoi's concerns. While Vietnam might not abandon its campaign in Kampuchea under Soviet pressure, the Soviets still could claim to the Chinese that they were no longer supporting Vietnam's effort and were amenable to new political arrangements that could be worked out. This might involve some sort of face saving settlements that would not represent a defeat for Vietnam but would get most of their troops out of the country.

- Third World: In the Third World, I believe we can expect not only a continuation of the direct and indirect destabilization activities the Soviets have had underway in recent years but perhaps an increase in that activity. In many ways Soviet policy in the Third World is likely to be indicative of a more assertive Soviet role abroad generally, although as our papers on Andropov have made clear, he prefers to win by strategem and maneuver rather than resort to force -- although he will use force if maneuvering fails and the risks are deemed acceptable.
- China: As I have suggested in several places above, I believe Andropov is playing a key role in the new initiative to try and patch things up with China. At some point, this will involve tough decisions for the Soviets because any real reconciliation with China will require acceding to Chinese preconditions relating to Afghanistan, Kampuchea or Soviet deployments along the Chinese border. The latter is probably the least difficult area for the Soviets to be responsive. Andropov's pointed conversation with Foreign Minister Huang Hua after Brezhnev's funeral, the meeting between Huang Hua and Gromyko the next day and Chinese willingness to send Huang Hua is indicative of both powers intent to pursue an improved relationship at minimum and to improve their mutual positions with respect to the US.

8. In sum, the US faces a new and, in many ways, far more intelligent and skillful adversary than we confronted in Khrushchev or Brezhnev -- and a man who is a "doer". He is familiar with the world and a realist. My money says we will face a much greater challenge from the USSR under his leadership. While the specifics of his program are difficult to construct, we should be prepared for new Soviet initiatives in both internal and foreign policy. A leadership has come to power during the last week in the Soviet Union with greater power and more unity at the highest level than after either the succession in 1953 or 1964. It has come to power with considerable work to do and Andropov is not a man who will delay in setting in motion initiatives to address a number of issues and problems. The effort to repair relations with China -- long thought out of the question by most analysts in the West -- I believe is indicative of the kind of flexibility, pragmatism and boldness we can expect from this new leader.

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